

GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE REFORM: AN INTRODUCTION

If the political and economic future of our globe is shrouded in obscurity and controversy, there is one striking trend of which we may be certain: our collective future will be even more urbanised than it is now. Current projections estimate that the whole world will be predominantly urban by the year 2007; and the 'developing' world, which has historically been much more rural than the 'developed' world, will itself, on the aggregate, pass the urban threshold by the year 2019 (United Nations, 2002, p. 163). As the world urbanises, it sorts itself into spatially distinct patterns with respect to both density and size. The trajectory of the number and average size of large cities is especially interesting. At the beginning of the 19th century, Peking (now Beijing) was the only city with a recorded population of more than a million. A century later, 16 cities had achieved this size. By 1950, the number had risen to 83, by 1975 to 195 (National Research Council, 2003, p. 85), and by the year 2000 it was estimated that there were 387 cities with one million or more population (United Nations, 2002, p. 309).

While there are more and larger cities on the planet, an increasing number of them are located in developing, or 'less developed' and 'least developed' regions of the world, to use the current United Nations nomenclature. Thus of the 195 large cities in the world in 1975, 122 (or 63%) were in the developing regions; by 2000, 297 out of 387 (or 77%) were in developing regions, and by 2015, when it is estimated that the whole world will be well into its urban phase, 449 out of a total of 554 (or fully 81%) will be in the developing world. (National Research Council, 2003, p. 85). Finally, it is worth observing that the average size of the world's largest cities is also growing. Whereas in 1800 the world's 100 largest cities averaged 165,000, the average in the early years of the current millennium is greater than 6 million (National Research Council, 2003, p. 84). In their tabulation of the world's 'megacities'—or cities with more than 10 million persons—the UN observes that in 1950 there were only two, New York with more than 12 million inhabitants and Tokyo with over 11 million. By 1975 there were four, of which two—Shanghai and Mexico City—were in 'less developed regions'. And by 2015 there will be twenty-two, of which all but five will be in the developing world (United Nations, 2004, p. 7).

This powerful surge of urbanisation, which has already consolidated itself in Europe, North America and most parts of southern Latin America, is increasingly being fuelled by intra-urban rather than migratory sources of growth. Much of this intra-urban growth will reflect the process of expansion, as large cities embrace rural settlements on their outskirts. In any case, as we are again reminded by the UN, '[a]lmost all the growth of the world's total population between 2000 and 2030 is expected to be absorbed by the urban areas of the less developed regions' (United Nations, 2004, p. 1).

These trends of urban growth and consolidation have produced, all over the world, agglomerations that we have termed 'metropolitan areas'. Definitions of what is 'metropolitan' as opposed to merely urban abound, but the Canadian definition of a 'census metropolitan area' can stand as a useful starting point. These areas are defined as 'cities with a very large urbanized core, together with adjacent urban and rural areas which have a high degree of economic and social integration with that core' (United Nations, 2002, p. 134). To these elements we can add the notion of a threshold size for the core city—100,000 in Canada and at least 50,000 (at least until more complex definitions took over) in the United States (Stephens and Wikstrom, 2000, p. 15); and the idea of political and cultural importance (Johnston *et al.*, 2000, p. 501). 'Metropolitan areas' around the world are generally comprised of a number of clustered, multi-centred cities, a large total population (normally over 1 million) and a complex

and usually very fragmented governance system. As they grow in size, these metropolitan areas have in many cases become regions—a step higher in the geographical lexicon than ‘areas’ or ‘agglomerations’. These regions can be very large indeed, rivalling provinces or states as second orders of social and political organisation, even though in most cases their formal political status is unclear. The largest regions can be up to 10,000 km² in size (Brennan, 1995, p. 243). From the more traditionally structured ‘global city-regions’ of London, Mexico City, or Emilia-Romagna (Scott, 2001) to the huge, sprawling ‘desakota regions’ of Southeast Asia that mix rural and urban settlements and modern and traditional economic activities (McGee, 1991), new forms of spatial and social organisation are emerging. A major challenge of comparative public administration is to unravel the common elements in the growth of these metropolitan areas and regions, with trends and concepts that help us to understand the dynamics of these increasingly important political spaces.

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT REFORM

While much has been written on the problems of servicing large cities, this special edition focuses specifically on the issue of metropolitan governance. All over the world, large metropolitan areas encounter problems of governance. As their populations and land areas increase and their economies and social systems become more and more complex, the governing structure comes under more and more pressure. Different solutions are attempted in almost every large city region, but the debate persists over what forms are the best or most appropriate for each local area. The question of governance reform is almost always on the agenda.

Clearly, metropolitan areas require special consideration for reorganisation. The density of population, the existence of multiple, overlapping jurisdictions, increasing social and economic polarisation and the need to co-ordinate services over larger areas while simultaneously ensuring proximity between rulers and the ruled, are just some of the factors that have to be taken into account in organisational reform. Cities tend to develop in an incremental but often patchy form, and because jurisdictional change lags behind the growth of metropolitan areas, relatively few of them are administered as a single entity. Most metropolitan areas are fragmented, although the degree of fragmentation varies between, as well as within countries (Paddison, 1983; Norton, 1994; Sharpe, 1995).

Political fragmentation refers to the presence of numerous local governments within a single urban area. Each local government has jurisdiction over a section of the city (or a function) and there is no single local government. The idea of metropolitan government as a new level or approach to local government for large areas, grew from the recognition that individual local authorities in fragmented systems were unable to cope with large-scale urban conditions such as water supply, sewers, public transport and in more recent times, planning and municipal finance (Barlow, 1991, p. 33).

Across the world, many reasons are proposed for the creation of metropolitan governments, in the place of existing local and/or patchwork institutional systems. Reasons for metropolitan government, often cited by would-be reformers, include:

- The growth of population and the expansion of economic and social activity appear to cause urban municipalities to reach a saturation point. Economic growth may be retarded because one city or municipality has no say in the development of neighbouring localities. The latter may either resist developments which are in the interests of the central city, or may not coordinate these policies and activities with those of the central city. This can lead to stagnation or to unplanned and uncoordinated growth. The general complaint is that central cities and towns are denied reasonable space for essential development.
- For certain services and infrastructural investments, individual municipalities within larger metropolitan areas no longer appear to have jurisdiction over the optimal area. Many services, such as police, public transport, sewerage and refuse disposal, should be provided for the area as a whole.
- Land-use planning can only be provided in a co-ordinated way if the area includes the integrated economic and social metropolitan area as a whole.
- The need—sanctioned by a more regionally-based government—to redistribute resources and services from richer to poorer areas (Leemans, 1970; Paddison, 1983; Norton, 1994; Sharpe, 1995).

Historically, metropolitan governments have been put in place in some large urban regions in Canada, England, Holland, Denmark and Spain. There are few (some would say no) true metropolitan government systems in the United States (Rusk, 1993). Most metropolitan areas in developing countries do not have metropolitan governments, although promising approaches can be identified in China, Brazil and Philippines.

Metropolitan types of government have seldom been applied in Africa (with the notable exceptions of South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal) (Mawhood, 1993, pp. 10–11).

The aim of this special journal issue is to examine recent metropolitan governance reforms in both developed and developing countries. Metropolitan governance reform has taken various forms. In some cases it has involved the creation of two tier metropolitan structures; in other cases it has involved the consolidation of two- structures into a single-tier (mega city) authority. In some cases co-coordinating metropolitan structures with limited powers have been introduced. There have also been a few examples of demergers from metropolitan authorities. A number of these approaches are evident in this special edition both between and within countries.

DECENTRALISATION REFORMS AND THE EMERGENCE OF 'GOVERNANCE'

The interest in metropolitan governance is part of at least two major global movements. Perhaps the most evident is a global tendency for greater *decentralisation* to local government. Wollman (2003) suggests that there have been four important trends in Western European local government over the last 30 years. Firstly, there has been a move towards greater decentralisation in previously centralist countries. For example, France passed its first major decentralisation law in 1981. Second, there have been New Public Management (NPM) reforms which involved the downsizing of public sector bureaucracies and the use of market principles in service provision (also see Carmichael and Midwinter, 2003). Third, (and almost operating in an opposite direction to the second point) is the strengthening of political citizen rights as well as political leadership and political accountability in local government. Finally, local governments have come under increasing budgetary pressures due to dwindling revenue and increasing expenditure. While there are differences in the degree to which individual countries have embraced these reforms (Stoker, 2002, pp. 36–37), they are a useful overview of patterns in OECD countries more generally. All these factors in turn have influenced territorial reform (Meligrana, 2004).

Many of these trends are evident in third world countries as well. Decentralisation to local government is beginning to occur in developing regions, including Latin America, Asia and Africa (Crook and Manor, 1998; Campbell, 2003; Mback, 2003; Prud'homme, 2003; Totté *et al.*, 2003; Oxhorn *et al.*, 2004). Local government reforms in Africa, for example, have been influenced by the economic crisis which has led to political and economic reforms (Olowu, 2003). These reforms have been promoted by donor agencies, most notably the World Bank (World Bank, 1989; Olowu, 2003) although Manor (1999, pp. 29–30) suggests that such multilateral bodies tended to support decentralised institutions once they were created rather than to have overtly pressured governments to introduce decentralisation in the first place. However compared to other parts of the world, African countries still tend to be rather centralised (Olowu, 2003). Manor suggests that this limited decentralisation is due to the fact that nascent state formation is taking place concurrently with democratic decentralisation reforms (1999). Decentralising power is often seen as a risky endeavour within a context of political instability most notably ethnic and regional cleavages (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990; Mawhood, 1993; Olowu, 2003; Prud'homme, 2003). But these observations apply to many non-African countries as well. For example, in Bolivia at the moment of writing (mid-2005) the major national political cleavage pits the indigenous majority of the population (living largely in the sierra and mountainous areas) with the population in the more low-lying areas who wish to have even greater decentralised powers than the constitution now permits. Decentralisation has, however, been embedded in the constitution since 1994 (O'Neill, 2004).

There are also issues of *governance* which impact on decentralisation. Manor (1999, p. 55) suggests that there are four necessary conditions for decentralised institutions to succeed. These include sufficient powers to influence the local environment including significant development activities, sufficient financial resources, adequate administrative capacity and reliable accountability mechanisms. The latter condition includes accountability of elected politicians to citizens as well as accountability of bureaucrats to elected officials.

These features have historically been absent in the African local governments, which tended to be rather weak with limited autonomy and financial resources (Laleye and Olowu, 1989; Mawhood, 1993; Manor, 1999). However as pointed out above, there has been progress in that there has been a spate of decentralisation initiatives in Africa in recent years. Local governments in Africa were promoted *inter alia* because they were seen as being more effective in promoting development than central government as well as more democratic in that they were accountable and responsive to the citizenry (Van de Walle *et al.*, 2003). While many challenges still remain in implementing democratic local government (Olowu, 2003) there is no doubt that, even in Africa, the central idea of governance—that is, the operation of the relationship between civil society and the formal institutional structure of government—is starting to be understood. Since this relationship tends to be both more visible and more robust at the local rather than at higher levels of government, the trend towards decentralisation has probably reinforced local initiatives towards improved governance.

Decentralisation and improved local governance cannot be abstracted from the movement towards greater democratisation that has been sweeping the world since the 1970s. Huntington has called this the 'third wave' of democratisation, noting that it began in Portugal in 1974, spreading outward from there, eventually engulfing more than 30 countries in both industrial and developing areas (Huntington, 1991). The region that has most markedly welcomed democratic reforms since the 1970s has been Latin America where, by now, a very high proportion of countries are functioning electoral democracies. In Latin America, as national governments have democratised following the shedding of autocratic and military forms of rule during the 1980s, local governments have been democratising as well. Not only are local mayors elected in virtually all mainland Latin American cities, but thousands of local councillors, regional officials and other executive officers at the sub-national level have to regularly answer to their constituents (Campbell, 2003). In Latin America, a major factor behind the movement towards greater electoral accountability at the local level has undoubtedly been the growth, and continuing strength of civil society. This is particularly obvious in the case of urban services. Many studies show that when urban services were not effectively delivered to the poor, civil society took up the slack with strong organisational initiatives in such areas as self-help clinics, soup kitchens, gardening organisations and the like (Reilly, 1995). Since much of this self-help organisation took place in very large cities, the issue of metropolitan governance—in the sense of seeking the proper connection between local government bodies and their constituents—has been consistently raised.

METROPOLITAN AREAS: NATIONAL OR LOCAL?

At this point we turn to the question of whether metropolitan areas are 'national', 'regional' or 'local' in their dynamics and in their impact. In the case of the very largest and most prominent metropolitan areas—such as Paris, Shanghai, Sao Paulo or Mexico City—the city regions play an immense part in the national economy, and are extremely important culturally, socially and politically. Normally, the economic benefits to firms of locating in large cities can be attributed to both localisation effects (which pertain to the benefits of clustering with other firms in a given industry) and urbanisation effects (which involve benefits from the size and diversity of the cluster). Both of these positive effects are known as agglomeration economies, which are typically present in large rather than small settlements. There are many factors (such as crime, the breakdown or inadequacy of infrastructure and/or the weakness of public and private services) which may mitigate the positive effects of agglomeration economies, but as a general rule the evidence suggests that large cities make a strong contribution to national economies (National Research Council, 2003, chapter 8).

The estimation of the economic benefits of cities to national economies is never an exact science. One method is to compare the contribution of typically urban economic activities to the proportion of the total population living in cities. Thus, if developing economies are summarised in terms of the three major sectors of agriculture, industry and services, all major regions show that the contribution of industry and services (almost entirely located in urban areas, and particularly in the largest urban areas) to GDP well exceeds the level of urbanisation. For sub-Saharan Africa, which was 33.1% urbanised in 2002, 82.2% of its GDP growth was explained by industry and services; for East Asia and the Pacific, the comparable figures are 38.2% and 92.2%; for North Africa 58.0% and 89.6%; for

South Asia 28.0% and 93.4%; and for Latin America and the Caribbean 76.4% and 89.7% (Kessides, 2005, Tables A1, A4). This strongly suggests that cities make a substantially greater contribution to the national economy than do smaller towns and rural areas, in terms of the population living there. Urban areas are more productive, argue these figures, than are other areas of the country, even when in many cases still, the country remains predominantly rural.

The largest cities make the most substantial contribution, according to estimates arrived at covering the period from the 1970s to the 1990s. While the economic calculations depend on a number of assumptions (which some careful economists might question), the overall figures are rather striking. Some examples of major cities (some featured later in this issue) may be interesting. Thus, Sao Paulo (Brazil), Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Mexico City show, respectively, 8.6%, 35.0% and 14.2% of the population of their country; while they contribute 36.1%, 53.0% and 33.6% of their country's GNP. In Africa, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and Nairobi (Kenya) constitute 18.1% and 5.2% of the population of their countries, but contribute 33.1% and 20.1% of national GNP. Similar disproportionate figures have also been produced for the larger cities of Asia (Freire and Polèse, 2003, p. 6).

Whether or not agglomeration economies operate in large cities is dependent on many factors, which may vary tremendously among cities. Among these factors appear to be the following: (1) the adequate provision of infrastructure and public services; (2) feelings of safety and security among the working population (Freire and Polèse, 2003); (3) honest and efficient management of urban services (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2004, p. 16). The first of these factors is largely a function of the level of wealth of the city in question; the second is a measure of the levels of trust, social capital and civic-mindedness among the population; while the third is often related to what is conventionally known as 'good governance' at the local level. Cities have different measures of each and the situation is, of course, very complex. But institutional reforms at the city or metropolitan level to improve tax collection, the regulation of traffic and small-scale trade, or the distribution of important services such as water, electricity and education must begin with a political base that is sustainable. Technical reforms of an institutional nature—whether to describe the legal parameters of a single-tier (as in South Africa) or two-tier system; whether to base local elections on wards or larger sub-regions of the city; whether to have the mayor elected at large or by other councilors—these kinds of reforms are being actively discussed in many large cities throughout the developing (and developed!) world. The outcomes of these discussions will at least partially depend on the strength and traction of local politics in the cities in which the discussions are taking place. Just as we can understand the importance of cities to the overall development of countries, we will need to pay attention to the shape and intensity of local politics in the largest cities.

Since the democratic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, and the decentralisation initiatives of the 1990s—both described above—political power has been gradually shifting in many developing countries. Campbell has described the complex of changes that have been taking place in local governance in Latin America as a 'quiet revolution'. By this he means that, all over the continent municipalities have been acquiring more powers, gaining more financial integrity (albeit slowly), gaining more professional administrators and more responsible elected mayors and councillors, and in general managing themselves more effectively than was the case during the long period of authoritarian rule (from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s) (Campbell, 2003). On the one hand, this gradual enhancement in the professionalisation of municipalities seems to have led to improved delivery of services in many Latin American cities (but not everywhere, as the continuous resistance to urban water privatisation schemes in Bolivia illustrates); on the other, the advances recorded have been modest so far. This is a complex story, but some of the factors limiting the ability of the newly elected mayors from accomplishing more during their mandated period have been the persistence of local forms of clientelist politics (Graham and Jacobi, 2002; Duhau and Schteingart, 2003; Santín del Río, 2004); conflicts between some of the larger cities and their state governments (in Brazil) (Boschi, 2003); failures of national governments to match revenues and revenue sources with powers and functions decentralised to the local level (Mizrahi, 2004); and conflicts between mayors and the elected local councils (Myers and Dietz, 2002). In sub-Saharan Africa, where national elections—for example in Kenya during the 1990s or in Zimbabwe in 2005—often illustrate the strength of opposition parties in the capital cities, there is a natural political tension between the larger metropolitan regions and the leadership of the country. This tension may be partially a result of the greater activism of civil society groups in the big cities; and partially a reflection of

the continued rural bias of African elected governments in the face of rapid urbanisation. While we have no systematic studies of the effect on local services of more frequent and more open municipal elections in Africa, what we can observe is that—as in Latin America—decentralisation and (at least modest) democratisation at the local level have led to greater attention to urban needs. The greater prominence of local politics in large (as well as small) urban areas around the developing world is a consequence of greater political pluralism, new arrangements for electing (rather selecting) mayors and decentralisation. As we gradually develop a portfolio of case studies of local politics in these newly-enfranchised but growing metropolitan areas, we begin to understand the degree to which local politics and attempts at administrative reform in large cities may reinforce each other. But it is much more common, as some of the case studies in this journal illustrate, for reforms of metropolitan governance to result from top-down attempts on the part of national or intermediate-level governments with constitutional power over the cities, rather than from bottom-up attempts by citizens to change their own governments. In few cases, over the long run, have the technical arguments advanced in favour of reforms been vindicated.

SPECIFIC REFORMS

This edition consists of a number of contributions. Bernard Jouve examines structural reorganisation in Western Europe. He argues that over the last decade many European states have exhibited new institutional dynamics affecting the government of their cities. This renewal of interest in metropolitan governments carries on a set of processes that have been ongoing since the beginning of the twentieth century when the first municipal reforms, both in Europe and in North America, resulted in annexations and amalgamations of municipalities.

He argues that while this analytical framework is certainly pertinent in many respects, it is incomplete. The institutional dynamics affecting European cities in the 1990s can also be explained by a set of major transformations to the structure of European states. These modifications relate to the new division of powers between the states and local and regional powers. They took the form either of processes of decentralisation and regionalisation (in France, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia), or of processes of federalisation (in Italy, Belgium and Spain). These transformations are essentially linked to the impact of globalisation and to the renewed popularity of a mode of state organisation associated with mass production and fordism. The upheavals brought about by the post-fordist transition in the European countries had impacts, not only on the conduct of national public policy but also on the dynamics of relations between the different levels of government.

He concludes that against the backdrop of globalisation, exacerbated territorial competition and the questioning of the welfare state, the institutional dynamics of the 1990s had the principal impact of transforming the reason for being of urban institutions. This was not solely in terms of procedures for the delivery of public services and urban planning, but also in terms of institutions charged with anchoring the civil societies of Europe into globalisation.

Cristina Rodriguez-Acosta and Allan Rosenbaum's article looks at the governance of metropolitan areas in Latin America. Two of the most important trends occurring in Latin America and the Caribbean during the past quarter century have been rapid urbanisation and government decentralisation. With approximately 75% of its 520 million inhabitants living in urban areas, the region has seen the emergence of such megacities as Buenos Aires, Lima, Mexico City and Sao Paulo. The region has been struggling with the issue of decentralising its historically highly centralised national governments and strengthening its traditionally very weak and highly dependent local governments. In this article, the authors examine local governance structures in several major urban areas of Latin America in order to understand how these two sometimes highly contradictory developments are impacting upon the governance of metropolitan areas and the resolution of the major problems facing them.

Municipalities have during the course of the past two decades begun to slowly acquire some measure of independent policy-making capacity and understandably are reluctant to cede even modest authority to area-wide governing bodies. In the face of this reluctance, many of the Latin America's metropolitan areas have slowly begun to experiment with the development of various forms of voluntary cooperative efforts at addressing regional problems. In most cases, these efforts are relatively limited and in their early stages.

Aprodicio Laquian argues that Asian city-regions are faced with serious problems like water and energy shortages, environmental pollution, traffic congestion, slums, squatter colonies, crime, ethnic conflicts and bureaucratic

corruption. In response to these problems many of these Asian city-regions have carried out metropolitan governance reforms to achieve two often conflicting goals: (a) efficient delivery of urban infrastructure and services through coordinated region-wide structures; (b) decentralisation, local autonomy and greater people's participation in public decision-making. In respect to the first goal, Asian urban authorities have recognised that if city-regions are to energise economic and social development, they need more effective area-wide and professionally managed urban services. With respect to the second, the authorities have learned that in order to sustain development, the active participation of people is needed in governance processes such as interest articulation, policy formulation, selection of leaders, mobilisation of resources, programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation. People's involvement is also needed to achieve transparency, accountability, social equity and geographical balance in city-regions.

He concludes that metropolitan governance reforms in Asia have mainly been top-down efforts, executed by central and state/provincial governments. Autonomous local governments in city-regions have not been too eager to cooperate with each other and have failed to pool their resources and coordinate their efforts to make infrastructure and urban service delivery more efficient. Strong traditions of local autonomy and recent programmes advocating decentralisation of authority and power to local government units to achieve 'grassroots democracy' have hindered metropolitan reforms, especially in South and Southeast Asia. Although civil society groups in Asian cities are active in advocating social development they have not involved themselves too much in metropolitan governance reforms. Notable exceptions, however, are the situations in the Philippines and India where civil society groups have been successful in getting legislation passed providing for the representation of sectoral groups in city councils and metropolitan boards.

Andrew Sancton analyses the various approaches adopted within Canada to the problems of metropolitan governance over the past 50 years. This has been a period of exceptionally rapid urban growth, especially in areas immediately outside the boundaries of central-city municipalities. Such growth has caused the various provinces to constantly seek changes in local governmental institutions so as to adapt to this growth and to attempt to shape it efficiently and effectively. He examines a number of different structural arrangements in Canada including two-tier metropolitan government (metropolitan and regional governments in Ontario, the Corporation of Greater Winnipeg, urban communities in Quebec), the amalgamation of two-tier metropolitan systems into a single municipality (Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Montreal, Quebec City); de-amalgamations in Quebec metropolitan areas (especially Montreal) and the creation of flexible and innovative entities for metropolitan governance (regional districts in British Columbia, and the Montreal Metropolitan Community). Special attention is paid to the Greater Toronto Area.

He concludes that it is almost impossible to generalise about the institutional arrangements for the governance of Canadian metropolitan areas. There is a great variety from province to province. At one time it appeared that Canada—especially Ontario—had much to teach the rest of the world about effective two-tier metropolitan systems of government. As ideas about simplifying and downsizing governments took hold, the notion that, in addition to the constitutionally-prescribed federal and provincial levels of government, two quite distinct levels of local government were also needed, became increasingly indefensible.

Robert Cameron looks at metropolitan governance reform in South Africa, a country which has one of the most celebrated cases of transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy. His article analyses the evolution of metropolitan government in this country. During the past 10 years it has evolved from having no metropolitan government, to a two-tier metropolitan system and now to a single-tier metropolitan system. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) preferred single-tier metropolitan authorities as a means to, *inter alia*, promote redistribution of resources and services, promote strategic land-use planning and facilitate economic and social development. Because of the negotiated basis of South African democracy they had to settle for a two-tier system of metropolitan government in the interim phase of local government from 1995–2000. In the final phase of local government the ANC was able to replace the two-tier system with a single-tier system in 2000. The major thrust of this article is an examination of the policy process that led to the introduction of six single-tier metropolitan governments, and the debates that underpinned this decision. It also analyses new types of executive systems, forms of public participation, development and service delivery. Finally, it provides a preliminary analysis of

the performance of the new metropolitan governments. The article argues that structural reform, territorial changes, development of local government and new forms of service delivery have seriously overburdened local government in the short term and have detracted from service delivery. These unitary metropolitan authorities have, however, been operating for less than 4 years and must be given time to prove themselves before an informed evaluation can be made.

Celina Souza discusses the past and the current situation of metropolitan governance in Brazil in relation to three changes: in the political regime, in the federal system and in the dynamics of intergovernmental relations. She argues that this approach fills a gap in recent analyses about metropolitan governance, which tend to ignore the links among these variables. Many writers argue that the current constraints on metropolitan governance as only a result of financial limitations and of party-politics cleavages. In contrast to this view, she suggests that this interpretation does not fully explain why metropolitan governance and their entities have been abolished, either totally or partially, when the political regime changed from authoritarianism to democracy. She also argues that current constraints on metropolitan governance are more likely to be found in the past rather than in the present. This is because the choices made by the military in the 1970s as regards metropolitan governance have left deep legacies, therefore influencing future choices. When the political regime was changed, these past choices were inimical to the demands of a democratic system, of a stronger federal system and of complex intergovernmental relations, which have emerged with redemocratisation and were one of the foundations of the constitution approved in 1988 to legitimise the new regime. Thus urban reform in Brazil has focused on strengthening democratic and participatory mechanisms of municipal government rather than on questions of metropolitan governance.

Nick Devas argues in the design of urban governance structures, there is an inherent tension between 'scale' and 'voice'. Both aspects are important considerations if city government is to address the needs of the poor. Metropolitan-scale government offers the potential for resources (notably finance but also land, natural resources and skills) to be mobilised from across the city to provide services and infrastructure for all, including the poor. However the metropolitan scale can also mean remoteness of decision-makers from citizens and hence weakened citizen 'voice', especially of the poor. His article explores this tension, using material from recent research on urban governance and poverty in ten cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America. His analysis covers issues of jurisdiction boundaries, responsibilities for services and infrastructure, resource bases and mobilisation, performance in service delivery and access to services, political representation and accountability, and mechanisms of citizen participation. His conclusion is that the tension between scale and voice may be best addressed by a two-tier or multi-tier structure involving both a very local level, with statutory rights and a share of resources, accessible and accountable to the poor, together with an upper level, also democratically accountable, covering the whole metropolitan area.

CONCLUSIONS

The future of metropolitan reform, as the articles in this issue clearly illustrate, is an important but largely open-ended issue. In the developed world, this question has been debated for decades, though experience varies enormously and there are few clear guidelines for future policy that can be abstracted from comparative research. In developing countries, large cities were, until recently, largely under centralised forms of administration; but the new 'wave' of democratisation, reinforced by decentralisation and the growth of local civil society has put reform more squarely onto the political agenda, even if the choices are none too clear.

Is there some convergence between patterns of reform in developing and developed regions? On the one hand, the powerful and increasing global connections between and among large cities constitute a *prima facie* argument that—given the competitive nature of urban economies—some common approaches should begin to emerge. On the other hand, the political importance of metropolitan areas in their national systems means that governments need to pay careful attention to the degree to which they can permit large cities to develop more autonomously, to themselves establish local institutions which might challenge higher levels of government.

Whatever the reform scenario in particular countries, metropolitan areas represent impressive productivity and enormous wealth; as a result, they cannot be ignored. What we are seeing, through the eyes of our distinguished researchers in the following pages, are the outlines of a serious comparative discussion—at both the local

and international level—about the administrative and political development of our largest urban areas. Welcome to the debate!

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